GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1826
ANSWERED ON:16.12.2013
NUMBER OF MIGRATORY BIRDS
Sugavanam Shri E.G.

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has taken note that the number of migratory birds visiting the country has drastically reduced over the years and have become victims of anti-social elements;

(b) if so, the details thereof during the last three years and the current year;

(c) whether the Government has any proposal to create atmosphere/environment to attract large number of birds and to protect them;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN)

(a) and (b) About 370 species of migratory birds have been reported in India. Of these, 175 species undertake long distance migration using the Central Asian Flyway area, which includes central Siberia, Mongolia, the Central Asian Republics, Iran and Afghanistan, the Gulf States and Oman, and the Indian sub-continent. Select scientific institutions funded by the Central/State Governments, State Forest Department(s) and NGOs working for wetlands and migratory birds have been monitoring the status of these long distance migratory birds in India. According to the latest 'Asian Water bird census' coordinated by the 'Wetlands International', the populations of threatened migratory birds in the region are either decreasing or stable.

The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (also known as CMS or Bonn Convention) is an intergovernmental treaty, concluded under the aegis of the United Nations Environment Programme. It aims to conserve terrestrial, aquatic and avian migratory species throughout their range. India is a signatory to the Convention. The CMS Secretariat launched an Action Plan on 11 January 2008 for the Central Asian Flyway (CAF) which is one of the world's most vital routes for migratory birds. The CAF Action Plan covers 175 species of divers, grebes, pelicans, cormorants, herons, storks, ibises, flamingoes, anatids, cranes, rails, sungrebes, jacanas, crab plovers, oystercatchers, ibis bills, stilts and avocets, pratincoes, plovers, scolopacids, gulls and terns. Among these groups, 15 species are migratory birds of India and are listed in Appendix I of the CMS. Except one, all other species have been observed to be declining in Asia including in India.

The decline in the number of migratory birds is mainly due to hunting, trapping in the migratory routes, habitat destruction, pollution of wetland through domestic sewage, pesticides and fertilizers.

(c) to (f) The important steps taken for maintaining and creation of suitable habitat for birds and to protect them are given below:

i. Rare and endangered birds including migratory birds are included in Schedule-I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 thereby according them highest degree of protection.

ii. Stringent punishments have been provided for in the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 for violation of provisions of the Act.

iii. Important habitats of birds, including migratory birds have been notified as Protected Areas under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 for better conservation and protection of birds and their habitats.

iv. Financial and technical assistance is provided to the State/UT Governments for protection and management of Protected Areas.

v. Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has been established for control of illegal trade in wildlife and its parts and products.

vi. India is a contracting Party to the Ramsar Convention (Convention on Wetlands) and 25 wetlands in India have been notified as Ramsar sites.

vii. Ministry of Environment and Forests has notified the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2010, for better protection of wetlands in the country.